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Chairman: Mr. Niculescu (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Romania)
later: Mr. Brauzzi (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Italy)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Niculescu (Romania), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 100: Environment and sustainable development (*continued*)

Introduction of draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.22

1. **Mr. Maksimychev** (Russian Federation), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.22 entitled "linkages and synergies among environmental and environment-related conventions" on behalf of the sponsors (Canada, New Zealand, Russian Federation and Turkey), said that it was being submitted under item 100 (environment and sustainable development) and not under sub-item (a) thereof as indicated in the document itself; he asked the Secretariat to have the error corrected if there were any revisions to the text.

2. The draft resolution was the outcome of informal exchanges of views among interested delegations, which had contributed greatly to the development and improvement of its scope and content, and it was based on earlier efforts of several intergovernmental organs, including the General Assembly, and international organizations to promote the complementary nature of efforts made in the framework of the various conventions and to assist States, and the international community as a whole, with a view to improving the implementation of the commitments undertaken under the conventions concerning the environment.

3. The sponsors of the draft resolution had sought to draft, on the basis of previously agreed wording, a document that would set forth the general goals of consideration of the linkages among the conventions adopted by the General Assembly without dwelling unduly on the details of a process which was considered broad and participatory.

4. Finally, he said that the process should be carried out while preserving the autonomous nature of the conferences of the parties to the conventions and the prerogative of the latter to take specific steps for the implementation of the conventions.

Agenda item 103: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (*continued*) (A/54/152-E/1999/92)

5. **Mr. Al-Khalifa** (Bahrain) said that the report submitted by the Secretary-General (A/54/152-E/1999/92) drew attention to the activities being carried out by the Israeli authorities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the expansion of settlements and the destruction of Arab homes, and the negative impact those activities were having on the health of the population. Other similar activities included the seizure of Palestinian property and the diversion of water resources from Palestinian lands to Israeli lands without consideration of the harmful effects of these actions.

6. The dumping of toxic waste by the Israeli forces and the expansion of settlements in the territories occupied since 1967 in violation of the provisions of the Geneva Conventions, particularly the one relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war and of the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, particularly Security Council resolutions 446 (1979) and 465 (1980) which established that those practices constituted a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East and were causing damage in the territories and aggravating pollution in the region.

7. There was no disputing the fact that the Israeli practices in the occupied territories were not conducive to the peace process in the Middle East since the peace process could only go forward if the Arabs recovered their legitimate rights in accordance with international law, the conferences on the subject and the principle of "land for peace", and with the provisions of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978). It also required respect for the rights of the Palestinian people to their own State with Jerusalem as its capital and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan, up to the frontiers which had existed in June 1967, which also meant withdrawal of the forces occupying southern Lebanon.

8. The practices of the Israeli forces in the occupied territories were not in conformity with ongoing negotiations in the context of the peace process and

contravened the provisions of General Assembly resolution 53/196 of 15 December 1998, which reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources, and called upon Israel not to exploit, to cause loss or depletion of or to endanger the natural resources in the occupied Palestinian territory, ncluding Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan.

9. **Mr. Ayari** (Tunisia) said that the practices of the occupying Power, Israel, in the occupied Arab territories violated the letter and the spirit of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, particularly the one relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war, and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. The report of the Secretary-General on the subject listed the issues which distressed the Arab population, highlighted the intention of the Israeli authorities to try to make the policy on settlements a fait accompli and drew attention to the violations of the rights of the Arab population whose property was being confiscated and who were being pushed out from their own land.

10. The practices of exploitation and expropriation being carried out by the Israeli authorities against the Palestinian population — which was being deprived of drinking water — made it impossible for Palestinians to work on their own land; they were thus being deprived of the possibility of leading a decent life. The restrictions imposed on the Palestinian population extended to such areas as transport and food and also included the closure of the territories and the exploitation of the natural resources.

11. The report of the Secretary-General drew attention to the laws and proceedings which were being applied by the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories against the Arab population in such areas as investments, trade, the economy and the environment and the harmful effects this was having on the health of the inhabitants of the territories, and it revealed the suffering of the Arab population of the Syrian Golan which Israel had occupied.

12. All the commitments undertaken regarding the various aspects of the peace process must be implemented; the process was being threatened by the actions of the occupying Power itself. The success of the process would depend on observance of the fundamental principle upon which all the agreements designed to promote peace were based; elimination of all imposed restrictions, fulfilment of all the commitments undertaken so that the Palestinian people could exercise its right to self-determination and establish its own State and withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan.

13. **Mr. Aboul Gheit** (Egypt), after expressing the hope that the information contained in the Secretary-General's report on the item under consideration would continue to be updated, said that Egypt had led and continued to lead the way as regards the adoption of measures to achieve peace in the Middle East region. The strategic approach guiding Egypt's actions was based on fundamental principles, *inter alia* the need to respect the sovereignty of peoples, including that of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan, over their natural resources.

14. The policies and practices pursued by successive Governments of Israel in regard to settlements and the unjust exploitation of natural resources were contrary to the interests of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory and those of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan; they were also contrary to the continuing efforts of all players in the region to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Those practices, which deprived the owners of the territories of their natural right to exercise sovereignty over their resources in a manner corresponding to their legitimate aspirations for development and progress, clearly violated the basic rights reaffirmed in the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and established under international law.

15. Referring to certain aspects of the Secretary-General's report, he pointed out, in the first place, that the Israeli practices reflected a systematic strategy of seizing the bulk of the territories by imposing a fait accompli in the field and pursuing policies designed to expel the real owners for the benefit of a minority of occupiers. Secondly, the economic domination imposed by the Israeli authorities hindered the economic development of the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan, in violation of the norms of international law and the fundamental norms of respect for human rights.

16. The discrimination that was practised in respect of the right to water for daily use and for agriculture

was a clear example of the Israeli practices. Moreover, those discriminatory practices encouraged pollution that was detrimental to the inhabitants of the occupied Arab territories since polluting industries were attracted to those territories because they received tax exemptions. That was a premeditated policy on the part of the Government of Israel regarding the application in the occupied Arab territories of internationally recognized norms concerning the environment. Israel also limited the right of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan to education, thereby expropriating the future of an entire generation of young people and violating the natural right of the people to better their standard of living.

17. In all their resolutions on the subject, the General Assembly and the Security Council condemned the practices pursued by Israel in the settlements and the adverse social and economic repercussions of these practices on the Arab population of the occupied territories, and reaffirmed that the Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War was applicable to the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem. That was especially true of Security Council resolution 465 (1980) which reaffirmed the need to consider measures for the impartial protection of private and public land and property, and water resources of the Arab and Palestinian population.

18. He expressed the hope that the Government of Israel would take the necessary steps to put an end to the unlawful practices pursued in the territories, which were worsening the situation that the inhabitants of those territories had to deal with daily. The definitive solution to all aspects of the peace process in the region would require Israel to recognize the inevitability of strict implementation of the fundamental principle of "land for peace" on which the Madrid negotiations were based. Application of that principle should lead to the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories, including East Jerusalem, thus clearing the way to achievement of a lasting solution to the conflict on the basis of the right of all to security; establishment of an independent Palestinian State in the territories occupied after 5 June 1967, including East Jerusalem; withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon; and promotion of peaceful and good-neighbourly relations between the countries in the region based on cooperation, security and peace for all.

19. **Mr. Rahmtalla** (Sudan) said that it was becoming increasingly evident that the establishment of many settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan had created a multitude of serious problems for the peace process in the Middle East and that the solution of those problems should be based on the provisions of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and on the principle of "land for peace".

20. As in previous years, the report submitted by the Secretary-General referred to the difficulties facing the Palestinian people in the occupied territories as a result of the policies and practices of the Israeli authorities; the latter included the closure of the occupied territories, which further worsened the living conditions of the Palestinian people and of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied Syrian Golan. The report also reiterated the serious repercussions of Israeli occupation, particularly on health services for the Palestinians, and denounced the restrictions Israel imposed on students who, in order to attend class regularly, had to pass through checkpoints established by Israel and face other obstacles.

21. One of the most serious manifestations of the Israeli occupation and of the settlements established in the occupied territories was the adverse impact it was having on the provision, quality and quantity of drinking water available to the Palestinians. The control which Israel exercised in the occupied Palestinian territory and in the occupied Syrian Golan and its disregard for those issues were having negative repercussions on the environment. Several important watercourses which flowed towards Galilee and into the river Jordan, the Banias and Dan rivers had their sources in the Golan; those were Israel's main sources of water.

22. Israel must withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and from the Syrian Golan. Restrictions on the movement of persons and commercial goods must be removed, as must all limitations on entry into and exit from Jerusalem. It was necessary to demand that Israel put an end to all its unlawful practices in the occupied territories, since they were impeding economic development and the achievement of lasting peace in the region.

23. **Mr. Moussawi** (Lebanon) said that Lebanon had endured the unjust Israeli occupation for more than

21 years and it shared the concern of the international community at the inhuman practices of the occupying forces against the population of the occupied Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan.

24. The Israeli occupation had many economic and social repercussions on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and on the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan. Palestinian lands were still being confiscated. Palestinian homes were still being demolished, illegal settlements were still being built in the occupied territories and Israel was still trying to annex East Jerusalem and to drive out the Palestinians; people continued to be killed by the occupying forces and by the settlers, the occupation continued to have a serious impact on medical care, education and the environment in the occupied territories, and the restrictions and security measures continued to make peoples' daily lives a torment; Lebanon could, unfortunately, attest to all that. Likewise, territory in the Syrian Golan under Israeli control was being annexed, settlements were being established, water resources that originated in the Golan were being diverted and stolen, the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan was being held hostage due to the security restrictions and exorbitant taxes which were forcing the population to live without work and with enormous difficulties.

25. His delegation supported the efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Israel's continued occupation of the Arab territories and its pursuit of a policy of expanding the settlements contravened the spirit of the peace process.

26. The international community must insist that Israel put an end to those unlawful practices and respect the relevant United Nations resolutions which reaffirmed the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and called on Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon and from the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan. Israel must also withdraw to the 1967 borders.

27. His delegation urged the General Assembly to adopt the proposed new recommendation reiterating the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources.

28. **Mr. Al-Bader** (Qatar) said that the report submitted by the Secretary-General showed how far Israel had gone with its practices of confiscating land and diverting natural resources in the occupied territories and in the unlawfully occupied Syrian Golan.

29. Israel was forgetting the peace process that had been initiated in Madrid eight years earlier, according to which Israel was to put an end to all those practices. It was unfortunate that the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly those of the Security Council, which established that Israel's colonization was unlawful and an obstacle to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. It was also worth mentioning that the international community had condemned the annexation of the Syrian Golan and considered it without validity.

30. His delegation wished to draw attention to General Assembly resolution 53/196 which reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources and called upon Israel, *inter alia*, not to exploit, to cause loss or depletion of or to endanger the natural resources in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan.

31. His delegation called upon Israel, once again, to take serious steps to achieve stability in the region, to stop provoking the Arab citizens and to desist from the practice of confiscating land and natural resources. It also urged Israel, as a matter of urgency, to resume the peace process with the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon at the point where it had left off and to begin withdrawing from the territories occupied since 1967. His delegation looked forward to a twenty-first century free from war, and one in which peace and security reigned in the region.

32. **Mr. Hanif** (Pakistan) said that the occupation of the Palestinian territory had had serious economic, social and environmental repercussions for the people of Palestine who were being denied their legitimate rights in their homeland. Israel had created a system of restrictions that prevented the Palestinians from utilizing their own resources to meet their basic needs. Most of the Israeli activities posed serious health risks to the Palestinian people; the problem was being compounded by the burden of financing health care services and by the rising unemployment.

33. Not only was the unemployment situation in the occupied Palestinian territories critical but those who were employed were paid far less than the minimum wage received by other inhabitants; such discrimination was a violation of the fundamental rights of workers. The continued occupation had also aggravated macroeconomic problems, and the ambiguity of the legal and political situation had inhibited investment and growth.

34. The situation in the Syrian Golan was no different; the movement of the Arab population remained restricted and that population was facing further deterioration in living conditions resulting from restrictions imposed by Israel on employment and education and also because of the tax policies.

35. Frequent border closures and the uncertainty prevailing in those areas had affected trade, particularly exports, and it had not been possible to revitalize private investment. Accordingly, he stressed that the provisions of the Oslo Accords and the Wye River Memorandum should be implemented, the upsurge in settlement expansion should be stopped immediately and occupied land should be returned to the Palestinians.

36. History had demonstrated that the struggle of people against foreign occupation and for the realization of their right to self-determination could not be suppressed for long. Proponents of democracy should not apply a double standard to the right to self-determination, particularly for people under foreign occupation. It was incumbent on the international community to ensure that the Palestinian people were able to live in its homeland with honour and dignity and to put an end to alien domination in all parts of the world in the interests of securing international peace and security.

37. *Mr. Brauzzi (Italy), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic And Social Council (A/54/3, A/54/407)

38. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/54/3), said that the foreword, which had been written by Mr. Fulci, President of the Council, highlighted the main features of the Council's work during the year. The year had been especially innovative and productive; the Council had built on the improvements introduced in the past few years, inter alia, the bureaus which operated as close teams but with a clear-cut distribution of responsibilities for preparing the main items on the agenda. The substantive session had provided the Council with a new sense of identity and purpose and a new sense of effectiveness which extended both to its methods of work and to the substance of its outcomes.

39. With regard to methods of work, thanks to early preparation through informal discussions and panels, the Council had been able to complete all the elements of its wide-ranging agenda during the substantive session and to adopt communiqués and conclusions from the various segments. The substantive themes discussed in the various segments had been shaped to build on each other and to contribute from different angles to the key goals of poverty eradication and development, which had provided the leitmotif of the session as a whole and had helped convey a unified vision of the ultimate role of the Council itself.

40. The procedural improvements and that new sense of focus had, in turn, through the combined efforts of the Bureau and the secretariat, helped the Council achieve greater visibility than ever in the press and on the Internet.

41. The main — conceptual as well as policy — contribution of the ministerial communiqué adopted by the high-level segment had been to integrate the employment and gender dimensions into the struggle against poverty. The Council had not confined itself to reaffirming the commitments to poverty eradication, gender equality and full employment made at Copenhagen and Beijing, but had also made concrete recommendations for achieving those three goals together and, in so doing, it had advanced a central aspect of its own role — that of addressing key policy issues in an integrated manner. That outcome had greatly benefited from the one-day policy dialogue with the heads of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The dialogue had enabled Council members to consider the Cologne debt initiative and to assess the world economic situation. The slow growth of developing countries and the staggering human costs of the financial crisis had been among the main concerns underlying the debate.

42. Poverty eradication together with capacity-building had also been the main focus of the operational activities segment. The Council had made a strong call for further harmonizing the United Nations system's support in those areas and making it more efficient as part of the substantive guidance it provided for the further implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998. The debate had been characterized by a deep concern over the decline in core resources for operational activities and the funding difficulties which were occurring at a time when concrete results were being achieved and real progress was being made in the reform process.

43. Poverty eradication had also been an important focus of the coordination segment which had focused on development in Africa. The agreed conclusions adopted by the Council had shed new light on the links between peace, democracy, human rights and development. The Council had reaffirmed the priorities set by the Cairo Programme of Action and United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and, at the same time, had provided guidance in pursuing those priorities in key areas such as education and health.

44. The theme of the humanitarian affairs segment — special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance — had enabled the Council to address coordination issues while bringing in the longer-term development perspective. The Council had recommended a number of further improvements to the consolidated appeal processes so that they could generate more adequate responses. It had also reiterated that relief, reconstruction and development needed to be addressed simultaneously and in a mutually reinforcing way. The importance of starting to plan for rehabilitation at a very early stage had been stressed, as had the need for more flexible financing systems for transitional programming. Although that segment was still at the experimental stage, it was already making a clear contribution to the overall governance of humanitarian activities.

45. An innovative part of the outcome of the general segment had been the resolution that the Council had adopted on Haiti which had been triggered by a recommendation by the Security Council. The resolution set out the main features of a long-term programme of support for Haiti encompassing the economic, social, political and human rights aspects and included recommendations on the main features of a continued United Nations presence in Haiti. The World Bank and all relevant United Nations agencies and programmes had strongly supported the resolution's elaboration and that, in turn, had served to advance the Council's own coordination role.

46. Many of the actions taken by the Council under the general segment had been geared to promoting the effective integration of the follow-up to the major conferences of the 1990s. The general segment had confirmed the Council's determination to guide more effectively the work of its subsidiary machinery; the Council had gone through the reports of its subsidiary bodies and had adjusted their outcomes to promote coherence among them.

47. The Council was firmly establishing its role as the main United Nations interlocutor with the Bretton Woods institutions. It had held meetings with the Board of Governors of the World Bank and with that of the International Monetary Fund to address a broad range of issues including the relationship between the functioning of international financial markets and stability in financing for development. Those meetings had confirmed that there was growing unity of purpose between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions and a firmer commitment than ever to cooperate.

48. Considerable progress had been made in 1999, but much remained to be done. Ways must be found to reinforce the Council's support to the General Assembly as well as its own coordination role. In that perspective, the reforms that both the Council and the Administrative Committee on Coordination had been undergoing should prove mutually reinforcing in strengthening policy coherence and coordination throughout the United Nations system. In addition, the Council must deepen its dialogue and interactions with civil society and the private sector while at the same time leaving enough time for Council members to go through its broad-ranging agenda. That would be particularly important as the Council addressed the theme of information technology for its high-level segment the following year. The linkages between the Council meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions and the high-level segment also needed to be reviewed and strengthened so that those two sets of meetings could build more effectively on each other. The Secretariat stood ready to extend its full support to ensure that the revitalization of the Council was sustained.

49. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Council had endeavoured to enhance the discharge of its principal role of promoting coordination in the economic, social and related areas among the various actors of the system. It had also promoted dialogue and interaction between the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations system. It had met for the first time with the Executive Boards of the Bank and IMF to promote cooperation at the intergovernmental level.

50. In addition, the Council had done a lot, particularly at the high-level segment, to highlight core issues relating to development, such as market access and poverty eradication. The Group of 77 and China welcomed the outcome of the segment which had dealt with the advancement of women and attached great importance to the issue of information technology which would be considered at the next high-level segment. The occasion could be used to further crystallize thinking on the role to be played by the United Nations in that vital area. In that connection, it would be important for the General Assembly to make provision for a full discussion of the issues of science and technology during its fifty-fifth session in order to take advantage of the outcome of the Council in that area. Another important initiative taken by the Council in 1999 involved bringing greater public attention to its work and enhancing the transparency of its deliberations through use of the World Wide Web.

51. Despite the progress made by the Council there were still a few areas in which more work was required. The Group of 77 and China continued to be concerned by the tardy submission of reports, which adversely impacted on the quality of debate on various issues. Attention should also be drawn to the need for more effective streamlining of preparations for the sessions of the Council, in particular for the substantive session. Attention should also be paid to the logistical aspects of preparation in order to minimize the burden of the process, particularly for smaller delegations, while at the same time enhancing the quality of deliberation and negotiation.

52. **Mr. Kääriäinen** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, the associated countries Cyprus and Malta and also Iceland, welcomed the strengthening of contacts between the Council and the Bretton Woods institutions. The April meetings had brought together policy-makers in the area of development cooperation, foreign affairs and finance and the meetings with the World Bank and IMF had advanced the dialogue on several world economic and social issues. The European Union looked forward to the continuation of that process.

53. The attendance of many of the key players in the field of economic and social matters, including the heads of the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO, UNCTAD and the International Labour Organization, had made the dialogue at the beginning of the substantive session particularly fruitful. By highlighting the impact of women's empowerment on poverty eradication, the high-level segment had succeeded in raising awareness and putting gender issues on the agenda throughout much of the substantive session.

54. The operational activities segment had also dealt with the issue of poverty eradication and had highlighted the need for flexible responses that acknowledged the interlinkages between social development, capacity-building and poverty eradication. It had also focused on the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 53/192 on triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The European Union was particularly pleased to learn that the Administrative Committee on Coordination had showed commitment to implementing the resolution in a coherent and coordinated manner reflecting the commitment of the entire United Nations system to strive towards an integrated operational programme.

55. The European Union attached particular importance to the meeting on basic indicators and to the agreed conclusions of the coordination segment, which would provide useful guidance in the efforts to support overall development in Africa.

56. The humanitarian segment had become a useful forum for policy dialogue on the provision of humanitarian assistance; the European Union was prepared to work closely with other Member States and the Secretariat to ensure that the conclusions negotiated at that segment were implemented. It hoped that they would provide guidance for humanitarian actors in the field. Although the humanitarian affairs segment had become a fundamental part of the substantive session

of the Council, improvements were needed to make the segment more relevant to the humanitarian community.

57. In the area of post conflict peace-building, the European Union welcomed the adoption by the Council of a resolution on a plan for international assistance to Haiti, which had revived Article 65 of the Charter of the United Nations. Unfortunately, the substantive session had not been able to take a decision on the recommendations of the report of the Committee for Development Policy, which included recommendations on a revised set of criteria for the next triennial review of Least Developed Country status. The European Union hoped that the criteria would be drawn up as soon as possible so that the list of least developed countries could be updated.

58. The European Union considered that the agenda of the general segment should be streamlined so as to allow the Council to conduct targeted discussions on items which required its attention. Although progress had been made to make discussions more productive, much still remained to be done to ensure the effectiveness of the Council's coordination functions.

59. The European Union welcomed the Bureau's efforts to revitalize the Council; it was prepared to cooperate with the incoming bureau to further strengthen the Council's capacity to respond effectively to the challenges of the twenty-first century and to fulfil its role as envisaged in the Charter.

60. **Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) welcomed the work done by the Council in 1999, particularly the meetings held with the international financial and trade organizations. Those meetings showed that the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions wished to promote cooperation so as to achieve stability of the world economy. Special mention should be made of the debate at the high-level segment regarding employment, poverty eradication and the advancement of women The communiqué adopted at that segment contained recommendations to Governments to pursue balanced policies that would encourage participation of the private sector in the implementation of social programmes, establishment of a legal base and improvement of the education system.

61. His delegation was pleased that the problems raised by the transition from humanitarian assistance to post-conflict rehabilitation and development had been considered during the humanitarian affairs segment. The agreed conclusions of that segment emphasized the primacy of international law, the fulfilment of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the inadmissibility of violating decisions adopted by the Security Council regarding peace and security. They emphasized, in particular, that humanitarian assistance must be given impartially and not for political purposes. It was therefore necessary to continue considering the humanitarian problems caused by sanctions, which affected the most vulnerable groups of the population. Accordingly, the Council must cooperate increasingly with the Security Council.

62. His delegation welcomed the Council's resolution concerning Haiti which had revived Article 65 of the Charter, and the conclusions of the operational activities segment, which would help enhance the efficiency of those activities and ensure that they were adequately funded. Moreover, it considered the discussion of programmes for Africa during the coordination segment, which had resulted in a decision that the United Nations should coordinate assistance to that continent to be important.

63. Steps must be taken to further strengthen the role of the Council in the economic and social spheres and to encourage interaction between the bureau and members of the Council. The bureau's recommendations should be drawn up taking into consideration the views of Council members; to that end there should be periodic briefings, not only following meetings of the bureau but also before.

64. **Mr. Mozhukhov** (Belarus) said that 1999 had been a decisive year for the revitalization of the Council and the enhancement of its efficiency. Considerable progress had been made in a number of areas and preparations for the Millenium Assembly had advanced.

65. The preparatory work of the spring and summer had facilitated consideration of the items before the Council and the adoption of decisions on them. The Council should give more pragmatic and systematic consideration to the final documents of the international conferences and summits on economic and social affairs and related matters which had been held during the 1990s under the auspices of the United Nations. In that connection, he drew attention to the importance of the meetings held in May to consider basic indicators for the implementation of decisions and follow-up to those conferences.

66. His delegation also welcomed the discussion at the high-level segment of ways and means of strengthening international assistance, combating poverty and increasing employment. It therefore believed that the communiqué adopted at that segment should be supported.

67. The positive trend in relations between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions must be maintained. During the past session the Council had for the first time high-level meetings with members of the Board of Governors of the two institutions to consider new prospects and expand cooperation in the development activities of the United Nations and of the Bretton Woods institutions and to continue looking at areas in which the world financial system could be reformed. It would be very useful if the General Assembly could promote a dialogue between the Council, WTO and UNCTAD so as to achieve real universality of the trade system.

68. His delegation supported the Council's efforts to work with other organs, including the Security Council in the context of the Charter of the United Nations. It should be noted, in that connection, that Council resolution 1999/11 of 27 July 1999, proposed long-term programmes of assistance to Haiti. It would be worth expanding the Council's contribution to post-conflict peace processes in support of the Security Council and the General Assembly. It would be necessary to draw up conclusions and recommendations concerning humanitarian issues, such as the planning and implementation of humanitarian programmes and projects, based on agreed principles, for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of affected regions and countries; the support of the General Assembly would be invaluable.

69. The Council was also engaged in preparations for the Millennium Assembly and was considering aspects relating to information technology in the context of the United Nations so as to ensure coordinated implementation of the decisions adopted at international conferences. There should be a continued debate on coordinated implementation of United Nations activities in such areas as human settlements, humanitarian activities and the environment and to that end it would be useful to continue considering the reports of subsidiary organs at substantive sessions. In future, it would be necessary to strengthen coordinating functions so as to determine and implement policies in accordance with the growing importance of the United Nations in an increasingly interdependent world.

70. His delegation wished the Council every success in its innovating efforts and reaffirmed that it was prepared to cooperate with other countries and organs to reach the objectives established for the new millennium.

71. **Mr. Reshetniak** (Ukraine) welcomed the renaissance of the Council which had been evidenced during the high-level segment of the latest substantive session, which had been devoted to employment, poverty eradication and the advancement of women. His delegation supported the basic conclusions of the high-level segment with respect to the strategies on poverty eradication and the actions outlined in the ministerial communiqué, and it recognized the need for cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in a study on the impact of sanctions, in particular on women and groups with special needs. Council resolution 1999/59 of 30 July 1999 reaffirmed the important role of the Council in the economic assistance efforts of the international community and the United Nations system to States confronted with special economic problems arising from the carrying out of sanctions imposed by the Security Council. The Council should continue to address those issues, in particular their economic aspects, so as to resolve those problems.

72. His delegation commended the work done by the Council to enhance the efficiency of its functional and regional commissions and its subsidiary bodies and it welcomed the participation by the Economic Commission for Europe in the economic recovery of the countries of south-eastern Europe and its activities to promote transformation of the markets in the economies in transition. Steps must be taken to reverse the decline in resources for the Commission's regional programmes.

73. He also welcomed the revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social field. Greater importance should be placed on rationalization and harmonization of the procedures of the United Nations funds and programmes and closer links should be forged with the Bretton Woods institutions and other key partners; he commended the cooperative spirit demonstrated by those institutions during the meetings held earlier in the year.

74. **Ms. Miralles** (Venezuela), noting that employment and gender-related aspects had been included in the fight against poverty, said that poverty was also being affected by globalization; accordingly, political, economic and social matters, which until recently could be tackled more or less separately, were now interrelated. The linking of poverty eradication with such matters as the efforts to identify flexible strategies for debt relief, the search for a new international financial and monetary architecture, support for the family and specifically, for women and children, the fight against corruption and the emphasis on transparency of public administration, employment opportunities and many other matters demonstrated the need to focus development comprehensively and to draw up a supplementary strategy of international financial cooperation.

75. Hence the importance for the Economic and Social Council of establishing close ties with the Bretton Woods institutions. She therefore welcomed the recent activities along those lines, for they attested to real cooperation to achieve the shared goal of development for all and, in particular, the eradication of poverty.

76. The start of a new round of multilateral trade negotiations in the World Trade Organization was a good time to ponder the relationship between the preservation of the conditions of governance of the world economy and the fight against poverty. In that context, her delegation was concerned at the marked imbalance between levels of access to markets and levels of development and at the pressure being put on developing countries to abandon a series of active policies, without which they would be unable to overcome the structural problems of their economies, and the increased levels of competitiveness required for access to the world economy. If the twenty-first century was to see the eradication of poverty, steps would have to be taken to establish a true balance between the multilateral commitments of the developed countries and those of the developing countries.

77. The Economic and Social Council should establish a flexible mechanism for consultations which would enable it to coordinate United Nations humanitarian assistance more dynamically and which would meet whenever there was a major disaster, to coordinate effectively the activities of the United Nations agencies and the requests for international assistance. The link between United Nations humanitarian activities and development assistance activities must be clearly defined so that the former were not carried out at the expense of the scarce resources allocated for the latter.

78. **Mr. Darwish** (Egypt), after endorsing the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, turned to the resolutions adopted by the Council on the basis of the report of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development. Bearing in mind that the Council had endorsed the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development that the report of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development should be sent to the Commission for consideration, it was surprising that the Council had adopted three resolutions dealing with water resources and land management but had not done the same with other draft resolutions contained in that same report. His delegation would like to know what reason the Council had for the difference in treatment of the Committee's various recommendations. Those recommendations were essentially technical and concerned complex issues which were not on the Council's agenda and they should have been referred to the relevant subsidiary organ, in that case, the Commission on Sustainable Development.

79. There seemed no point in countries sending to the Council delegations made up of technical experts in the fields of energy, water resources, human settlements, human rights, gender, science and technology and so forth just in case the Council should decide to adopt technical decisions without prior consideration and without the corresponding negotiations in the relevant subsidiary organs. Shifting that work to the Council would be a poor use of resources and went against the efforts to avoid duplication of tasks.

80. The Commission on Sustainable Development would be considering, at its eighth session, issues relating to land management and water resources and it was necessary to make sure that the Council's adoption of resolutions on those issues did not influence the Commission's debate. His delegation was concerned at the possible conflict between the mandates, at the use of resources for a large number of superfluous meetings within the Council and at the limited number of member countries in such organs as the Economic and Social Council.

81. He reaffirmed the principle of the right of States to exploit their national resources in accordance with international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of the Rio Declaration and national legislation and he also reaffirmed the jurisdiction of the General Assembly as regards the implementation of the provisions of the Charter, particularly those relating to non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

82. His delegation looked forward to the debate in the General Assembly on water supply and medical care for all and it believed that the Assembly would be able to ensure that the goals of sustainable development were not achieved at the expense of respect for international law.

83. **Mr. Liu Jintao** (China) said that the Council had always played a very important role in international cooperation for development and had achieved positive results in carrying out reforms of its subsidiary organs and enhancing their efficiency. The discussions on development and poverty eradication in Africa which had been held that year demonstrated that the Council had tremendous potential to meet the challenges of the present time.

84. Now that the reform was completed, it was necessary to focus on implementing all the agreed measures and consolidating the achievements. The aim of the reform was to strengthen the United Nations; Member States must now fulfil their commitments and reverse the trend of declining support for United Nations development activities. It was important to implement, at the regional level, the programmes of action adopted at the major global conferences of the United Nations to that end, better use should be made of the comparative advantages of the regional commissions which were now more active in the work of the Council and had made positive contributions. In addition, the increased dialogue between the Council and the Bretton Woods institutions must be used to strengthen cooperation in meeting the challenges of development.

85. In evaluating the implementation of the major United Nations conferences it was important to utilize statistics and indicators as tools to assist policy making. The responsibility for producing and utilizing indicators fell mainly on governments but it was necessary to simplify the methodology and to enhance the capacity of countries to collect and analyse those indicators and statistics. The proposal of some countries that the United Nations should produce a set of core indicators should be considered in the functional commissions before any decision was taken.

86. Finally, efforts should be made to rationalize the agenda of the Council, to strengthen the preparatory work for the substantive sessions, to clearly define the mandates of the functional commissions and recognize their growing importance. The Council's discussions of the reports of its subsidiary organs should be thorough and result in substantive guidance instead of being just a formality.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.